Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting	)	PS Docket No 15-91
	)	
	)	

COMMENTS OF EMMIS COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

Emmis Communications Corporation[1] ("Emmis") submits these comments in response to the above-captioned Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, in which the Commission proposes to strengthen the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) service.[2] Emmis agrees with the comments filed by the National Association of Broadcasters and National Public Radio (the Joint Commenters), which encourage the Commission to embrace and encourage the activation of FM radio chips in all smartphones so that the public can readily access additional critical information upon receiving a WEA message.[3]

The Joint Commenters clearly and convincingly articulate the vast public safety benefits, as well as the minimal costs, associated with activating the FM radio chip in smartphones and allowing consumers to utilize local radio to supplement WEA messages. We will not recite the points made by the Joint Commenters, and instead hereby incorporate the Joint Comments into the instant submission. However, we would be remiss if we did not emphasize the following:

- Local radio stations are typically the best source of information in a disaster. As Craig Fugate, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Association, noted in a recent interview, "We always tell you: All disasters are local and the most important information is going to come from those local broadcasters that are plugged into local officials telling you what's going on on the ground."[4] With well-protected equipment, dedicated local power sources, back-up studios and transmitters, as well as experienced

[1] Emmis Communications Corporation is a publicly traded company (NASDAQ: EMMS) that through its subsidiaries owns and operates radio stations in markets across the United States, as well as the NextRadio® hybrid radio smartphone app which uses TagStation® cloud services to provide a rich FM radio listening experience on smartphones and tablets by combining the devices' built-in FM tuner and the internet. For more information about NextRadio®, visit NextRadioApp.com.

[2] *Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, PS Docket No. 15-91 (*rel.* Nov. 19, 2015) (Notice).

[3] Joint Comments of the National Association of Broadcasters and National Public Radio in PS Docket No. 15-91 (Jan. 13, 2016) (the "Joint Comments").

[4] Interview with Craig Fugate, FEMA Administrator, www.freeradioonmyphone.org.

professionals with excellent relationships with local emergency officials, local radio remains the pre-eminent source of information in a disaster.

- During emergencies, cellular communications networks often cease to function or are overloaded. In each of Hurricanes Irene (2011) and Sandy (2012), the East Coast Earthquake (2011), and the Boston Marathon Bombings (2013), as well as in countless other emergency situations, cellular networks were overloaded leaving people unable to gather life-saving information. This situation is unlikely to change because it is not cost effective to design a cellular network to withstand the peak traffic that occurs during an emergency.[5] As part of the Commission's overall efforts to efficiently allocate our Nation's spectrum, the Commission should also be actively encouraging the use of the most efficient spectrum in emergency situations. In the event of a local emergency, radio's one-to-many distribution system allows the substantially more efficient distribution of information about local emergencies than mobile wireless providers' distribution systems, and every effort should be made to encourage the use of the more efficient local radio system so that the mobile wireless networks can more effectively be used for one-to-one and other communications for which the mobile wireless network system is better suited.

- Of course, with virtually all smartphones already containing an integrated FM radio as part of the smartphone's WIFI/Bluetooth chip set,[6] the cost of providing this life-saving information from local radio stations to smartphone owners is effectively non-existent. Yet, as the Joint Commenters effectively demonstrated, the public safety benefits are enormous. The cost-benefit analysis of encouraging the activation of the FM radio in smartphones is not even a close call.

[5] "Why Cell Phone Networks Fail in Emergencies," Bloomberg Business, April 16, 2013.
[6] "FM Radio in Smartphones," NABLabs 2015, http://www.nablabs.org/projects/project.asp?id=3550.

For the reasons set forth above, as well as the reasons articulated in the Joint Comments, Emmis respectfully requests that, through this proceeding, the Commission strongly encourage all efforts to cause the FM radio chips in smartphones to be activated and available for use by all smartphone owners.

Respectfully submitted,

Emmis Communications Corporation

By: J. Scott Enright,
Executive Vice President,
General Counsel
and Secretary